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BEHEMOTH

- Lake Toplitz: This hoax has been mentioned in last Bilk. Now CENAP Report Nr. 236, p. 31, has more notes and some newspaper clippings. According to the German news agency dpa, 8. October 1996, British divers had discovered a "gigantic swimming monster" in Lake Toplitz, Austria. The creature was 10 - 15 ft in length and had a serrated triangular fin. Members of the "Royal Aquatic Society" managed to tape a video, but when the monster attacked the divers and bit through the cables of the camera, they fled. Austrian experts doubted their word and assumed they had only encountered a rotten tree stump floating underwater. Well, they had not - as you are aware, the whole story was a hoax for the German TV show "Verstehen Sie Spaß?"
- Loch Ness: Lots of news and sightings in Andreas Trottmann's "Loch Ness Newscipping Service" vol. 2, No. 3 (Les Pretresses, 1586 Vallamand VD, Switzerland)

ISIS

- Philippines: According to newspaper reports, Segundina Jimena claims that her three kids, as well as her late husband, have gills and can stay underwater for six minutes. (Fortean Times 93, p. 17)
- Florida, USA: An unidentified woman was rescued from the sea three miles off Fort Lauderdale on September 12, 1996. She said she lived in the sea and had only come up "to get some air". (Fortean Times 94, p. 15)
- "Humanoids from the Deep", a Barbara Peeters' movie from 1980, was screened in German TV on November 18, 1996. Monsters, half fish, half human, attack women in the sea and rape them.

LEVIATHAN

- Benbecula, Scotland: In 1990, Louise Whitts found a very strange sea creature washed up at the shore of Benbecula, the Hebrides island well known for sightings of anomalous sea creatures (though usually mermaids). The creature "had what appeared to be a head at one end, a curved back and seemed to be covered with eaten away flesh or even a furry skin and was about 12 ft long. It smelled absolutely disgusting, but the weird thing was that it had all these shapes like fins along its back - like a dinosaur or something." Alec Coles, curator and keeper of natural sciences at the Hancock Museum in Newcastle upon Tyne could not identify the beast, of which Whitts supplied a good colour photo. (Fortean Times 93, p. 9) To me it resembles very much the so-called "globster" of Tasmania (1962), which was later identified as decomposing whale.
- Mont Saint Michel, France: A modern statue, or a dried camel, or "some sort of sea creature" was photographed by Sian Thornton exhibited at Mont Saint Michel. (Fortean Times 94, p. 51)
- Madagaskar: At Anakao, a tiny fishing village in the southwest of Madagaskar, villagers fear the "Akiu Futi", the great white shark. It is the biggest shark ever seen and for 20 years, it has regularly approached the beach of the hamlet. The locals believe that the shark is possessed by the spirits of their ancestors. Albrecht Heise, in a documentary for the German TV channel ZDF, reported on the sea monster on August 30, 1996.
- Bibliography: Myself on Heuvelman's methods and manipulations in his sea serpents book, see Fortean Studies, 3, p. 223

KRAKEN

- Lowestoft, Suffolk, England: Six giant cuttlefish, the largest 70 cm in length, were washed up at at beach in Lowestoft in the first week of June 1996. (Fortean Times 93, p. 10)

● Bibliography: Michel Raynal defends the reality of the Florida monster octopus of 1896 after the recent devastating tests, see Fortean Studies, 3, p. 322



BIGFOOT

● On September 17, 1996, I received a short letter from one Otto Kreuzotter from N Merrick, New York, including a very unconvincing photo of Bigfoot. Kreuzotter wrote: "On a foggy morning I went into the forest with my camera and saw this thing. Can you tell me what it is?" I replied that I believed his photo showed a "homo sapiens furcoatiensis", in short, a human in a costume. However, I wrote I needed further info: When was the picture taken, when, by whom, etc. To which Kreuzotter replied rather lengthily on November 25: "Do you really think that such cynicism is in the spirit of scientific research? The photo was taken a few years ago. Why is it that editors of magazines dealing with the unusual seem to hate the unusual more than just about anyone else? They say that

borderline psychotics go into psychology + become psychologists exactly because they are fascinated by their own just-barely-disguiseable mental imbalance. This blind-leading-the-blind situation is one reason psychotherapy is so often ineffective - + why it often seems the inmates are running the asylum. Similarly in the exploration of the unusual, it often seems that it is just those people who are terrified by the thought of the unusual, + seem as if they would go insane if they ever encountered it (although of course we get hints of it every day), who become 'authorities', + mock every trace of the reality that lies just beyond the artificial constructs of contemporary naive realism. And so it is that I haven't been able to interest any unusual phenomena publication editor in this photo up until now. It was taken in a wooded area beside the parkway on Long Island, in the early morning. No flashlight or spotlight was used, nor did I see a UFO at that time. You can see the shadow of the being coming from one side. This is from the light of the morning sun. The unusual light effect behind the being is the result of the morning sunlight playing upon a unusually thick morning fog or mist - unusual on Long Island, but not unheard of. I don't know if alien or other-dimensional beings actually prefer to enter the mundane contemporary suburban world when the weather conditions are a bit more spooky than usual, or if it was just a coincidence. The wooded area where the being was photographed is definitely not large enough to be the permanent habitation of the being. I don't know if the UFO explanation is correct (although of course I've seen several UFO's over the years, as most people have), or if it is a being from another dimension, who simply walked through a dimensional warp or gateway... Please do print the photo, if you would like to, with as much cynical sneering as your fear of the unknown requires. I'm sure there are many people ... who will be interested in the photo, but we wouldn't want you to feel insecure." I stand by my opinion that the photo is a crude and unconvincing hoax, and from Kreuzotter's letter it appears that I am not the only fortean to think so. I do not know what was actually seen, but the print I have indicates quite clearly artificial light sources and perhaps even a studio environment. If the creature took the photographer by surprise in the morning mist, why is the whole photo in focus, the thing exactly in the centre of the print and why does it look like a human in a very badly-made costume? By the way, I'm not afraid of the paranormal - I simply call a hoax a hoax when I recognize it as such!